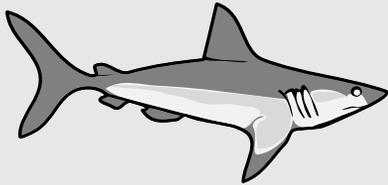




# Tortugas 2000

<http://fpac.fsu.edu/tortugas>



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### **Want To Know More?**

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### **Upcoming Working Group Meeting**

The next Tortugas 2000 Working Group meeting will take place May 22nd at the Harvey Government Center, 1200 Truman Ave., Key West, from 8:00am to 5:00pm. The agenda will focus on developing and evaluating a preferred boundary alternative, or range of alternatives, and reaching agreement on appropriate allowable activities for the Ecological Reserve. The Working Group's recommendations will be presented to the Sanctuary Advisory Council at their June 15th meeting.

### **Tortugas 2000 Working Group Meeting Summary**

April 22-23, 1999

Holiday Inn Beachside, Key West, FL

The objectives of this meeting were:

- Consider implications of the recent NMFS Gulf of Mexico fish trap ruling for the proposed Tortugas Ecological Reserve.
- Review the ecological and socioeconomic information collected for the site characterization of the Tortugas area.
- Review, refine, and reach agreement on the criteria to be used in drafting and later evaluating alternative boundaries for the Tortugas Ecological Reserve.
- Reach agreement on the relative importance of the different criteria.
- Develop a set of draft boundary alternatives for evaluation at the next meeting.

All of the meeting objectives were met. The site characterization panel revealed some interesting data on the relationship between oceanography and larval recruitment, particularly for fish. The take away messages from this panel are that: 1) the Tortugas is both a source and a sink for biological diversity; 2) there is a high probability that a larvae spawned in the Tortugas will either end up back in the Tortugas or somewhere along the Florida Keys; 3) the circulation duration of the gyres originating in the Tortugas region complement the planktonic larval duration of most of the commercially and ecologically important species in the Keys; 4) many species of snapper/grouper are overfished throughout the Keys, however the Tortugas stands out as the last remaining area of abundance and higher spawning potential; 5) Keys-wide grouper are at 1/10 of their historical production levels; 6) outside of the Dry Tortugas National Park recreational use is very light; 7) the Tortugas region is an extremely productive commercial fishery involving about 100 full-time fishermen and is worth about \$13 million dockside; 8) the fisheries that will be most impacted by the Reserve will be reef fish handline fishery and lobster trap fishery.

When the entire Working Group ranked the relative importance of each criteria against every other criteria developed at the last meeting, they found that, as a group, they gave the Biodiversity & Habitat criteria a 27% weighting (versus 100%); followed closely by Fisheries Sustainability with a 26% weighting. Enforcement/Compliance received a 17% weighting; Sufficient Size a 16% weighting; Socioeconomic Impacts a 9% weighting; and Reference Area a 5% weighting (see table on back). In order to get a less protective and more protective criteria ranking profile, the conservation-oriented Working Group members caucused and developed a profile as did the commercial use-oriented Working Group members. These three profiles were then used by four breakout groups of the Working Group to develop three boundary alternatives. The small groups were composed of members of mixed viewpoints and input from outside constituents was allowed via their representative. A number of commercial fishermen, researchers, managers, conservation

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## Meeting Synopsis

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representatives, and other citizens provided valuable input into the small group discussions. Each group was successful in coming up with three alternatives which they presented and explained to the whole Working Group at the end of the second day. It is anticipated that the Working Group will complete its task at the next meeting on May 22 when the members will seek to reach agreements on a preferred boundary alternative or range of alternatives and on allowable activities for the proposed Ecological Reserve to recommend to the Sanctuary Advisory Council.

## The Next Steps in the Tortugas 2000 Process

The Working Group will recommend a preferred boundary alternative to the Sanctuary Advisory Council. The Sanctuary Advisory Council will either modify or accept the preferred alternative and vote to recommend a preferred alternative to NOAA and the State of Florida.

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary will consider the Sanctuary Advisory Council's recommendation and will develop a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that will analyze the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the alternatives developed by the Working Group.

### Criteria Weighting Profiles Developed by the Tortugas 2000 Working Group at the April 1999 Meeting

Criteria Weighting Profile "A"	Criteria Weighting Profile "B" Less Protective	Criteria Weighting Profile "C" More Protective
Biodiversity and Habitat 27%	Fisheries Sustainability 25%	Sufficient Size 50%
Fisheries Sustainability 26%	Socioeconomic Impacts 25%	Fisheries Sustainability 20%
Enforcement & Compliance 17%	Enforcement & Compliance 20%	Biodiversity and Habitat 15%
Sufficient Size 16%	Biodiversity and Habitat 15%	Reference Area and Monitoring 5%
Socioeconomic Impacts 9%	Reference Area and Monitoring 10%	Enforcement & Compliance 5%
Reference Area and Monitoring 5%	Sufficient Size 5%	Socioeconomic Impacts 5%
<b>Total 100%</b>	<b>Total 100%</b>	<b>Total 100%</b>

## New Material Added to the Tortugas 2000 WebSite

Following the April 22-23rd Working Group meeting, a variety of new information was added to the Tortugas 2000 WebSite (<http://fpac.fsu.edu/tortugas>). Here you can find a summary of the meeting and a series of maps showing the study area and depicting bathymetry, current patterns, and various recreational and commercial use patterns. Continue to monitor this dynamic site for the latest news in the Tortugas 2000 process.



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